

**American Association of People with Disabilities**

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Washington, DC 20006

**RECEIVED**

**American Council of the Blind**

1155 15th Street, NW, Suite 1004  
Washington, DC 20005

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

**World Institute on Disability**

510 16th Street, Suite 100  
Oakland, California 94612

January 31, 2003

Marlene H. Dortch  
Office of the Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW. Room TW-B-204  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: **WC Docket No. 02-384 Reply Comments**

**Application by Verizon Corporation for Authorization Under Section 271 to Provide In-Region, InterLATA Service in the District of Columbia, Maryland and West Virginia**

Dear Secretary Dortch:

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), a national cross-disability membership organization created to represent the common interests of the entire disability community, the American Council of the Blind (ACB), the nation's leading membership organization of blind and visually impaired people, and the World Institute on Disability (WID), a nonprofit, public policy center dedicated to promoting independence and full societal inclusion of people with disabilities, are pleased to submit comments in support of Verizon Corporation's application to provide long distance service in the District of Columbia, Maryland and West Virginia.

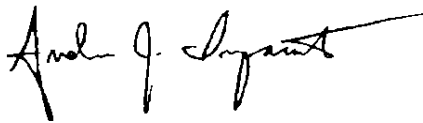
We believe that Verizon's entry into these state's long distance markets will benefit all consumers, particularly those with disabilities, by creating true competition in local, long distance and data services.

Verizon's ability to provide long distance service in the District of Columbia, Maryland and West Virginia will encourage the accelerated deployment of advanced telecommunications services. These services can provide significant benefits to people with disabilities. For example, advanced telecommunications can expand life-long learning opportunities, increase job training and placement resources, enhance the quality of health care and promote independent living and economic opportunities for people with disabilities.

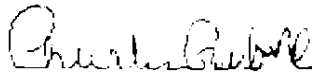
Moreover, Venzon's entry will bring meaningful competition to the long distance market. Because many people with disabilities are on limited incomes, the cost of services is extremely important. The introduction of a large, new competitor in the marketplace, would help **keep** rates low and encourage the development of new and innovative products and services.

AAPD, ACB and WID urge the Commission to quickly approve Venzon's 271 application for the District of Columbia, Maryland and West Virginia. We are confident that Verizon's ability to provide long distance service in these states will strengthen its commitment and ability to make communications technologies available, accessible and affordable to all consumers.

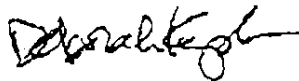
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew J. Imparato".

Andrew J. Imparato  
President and CEO  
American Association of People with Disabilities

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Crawford".

Charles Crawford  
Executive Director  
American Council of the Blind

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Kaplan".

Deborah Kaplan  
Executive Director  
World Institute on Disability